

DHERN January 2026 Newsletter

DHERN Announcements

- We are pleased to announce the 2025 DHERN Paper Award winners, Jyoti Dalal and Lukia Hamid Namaganda. We received and reviewed many great papers that give us hope for the future of disability health equity research. The papers selected for the awards are amazing and will be presented at the January 27, 2026 DHERN virtual meeting that occurs from 2-3PM ET. [Register for the Paper Award Meeting here](#). You will not want to miss these presentations and discussion with the award winners! Many thanks to our 2025 DHERN Paper Awards Committee: Alex Levine, Mihir Kakara, Bonnie Swenor, Scott Landes.
- If you would like to contribute to our work advancing disability health equity research, connecting researchers and trainees, and fostering the inclusion of disabled people in these efforts, you can [make a donation](#) to help sustain DHERN's mission.
- Share your recent publications, upcoming events, job opportunities with the DHERN community! To contribute to the next newsletter, please send details to us at dhern@jh.edu by the 28th of January.

JOBS

- [Postdoctoral Research Fellowship: Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training on Community Living and Participation \(ARRT\)](#)
 - a. The Ohio State University Nisonger Center (UCEDD) is currently recruiting for a 2-year postdoctoral research training fellowship funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). One position is available with a Summer/Fall 2026 start date. Applicants must hold (or complete by start date) a doctoral degree in psychology or a related field (e.g., public health, social work, special education), demonstrate interest or experience in community-engaged IDD research, and intend to pursue an independent research career in this area. Applications will be reviewed beginning December 15 and continue until filled. For more information, [visit the UCEDD website](#) or contact Katie Walton, PhD (Principal Investigator), with questions related to the position at katherine.walton@osumc.edu.

Study Recruitment

- We are seeking disabled people and disability advocates to take part in a research study. This research seeks to learn about the experiences of people with disabilities or those who support them. We want to know how being disabled affects things like where you live, where you work, and how you are treated in your community. This study seeks to create new ways to measure how rules, systems, and practices can create barriers for disabled people. Participation involves a 15–30-minute phone or Zoom pre-interview screening followed by a 1.5 hour interview. Not everyone who completes the pre-interview screening will be selected for an interview. If selected, participants will receive a payment for completing the interview. If you are interested in taking part, please scan the QR code on the attached flyer to complete a brief interest survey. If you are interested in

participating but find it hard to fill out the survey, please write to our research team at ValdezLabUVA@virginia.edu or call us at 434.982.2510. The University of Virginia Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences has approved this project under IRB# 6677. This study is led by Dr. Rupa Valdez at the University of Virginia and Dr. Bonnielin Swenor at the Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center. [View the full newsletter \(ASL, English, and Spanish versions\).](#)

Disability Data Equity Research Working Group Featured Article

- Beuoy, A., & Goddard, K.S. (2025). [Does who responds matter? exploring potential proxy response bias in the Washington Group Short Set disability estimates](#). *Frontiers in Research Metrics and Analytics*, Volume 10, <https://doi.org/10.3389/frma.2025.1654769>
 - a. The Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) is widely used to identify disability in national and international surveys, but testing has shown important differences in how questions are answered when people report for themselves versus when someone else reports on their behalf. Using combined data from the 2010–2018 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and logistic regression analysis, the study found that proxy respondents were 4.48 times more likely to be classified as having a WG-SS disability compared to self-respondents, even after adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics. These findings raise concerns that proxy reporting may systematically distort disability prevalence estimates, which can affect equity, resource distribution, and policy accountability. The authors recommend that future studies using the WG-SS treat the source of the response (self vs. proxy) as a key factor in evaluating data quality and equity, rather than something incidental.

Health Affairs Featured Article

- Arnold, M. L., Tonti, L., Phillips, S., Kershner, S. P., Lipton, B. J., Heslin, B., Ukert, B. D., Pesko, M. F. (2025). [Number of States Providing Medicaid Hearing Aid Coverage For Adults Increased; Variability Was Substantive, 2017-23](#). *Health Affairs*, 44(12), <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2025.00270>
 - a. Between 2017-2023, thirty-two states in the US provided Medicare hearing aid coverage for adults, with substantial variability in policy features of that coverage. Approximately 70 percent of Medicaid beneficiaries ages twenty-one and older lived in a state with coverage. Women, working-age adults, and Black adults had slightly lower odds of coverage, whereas Hispanic and Latino and other or multiple race beneficiaries had higher odds of coverage. Expanding and standardizing Medicaid coverage of hearing aid benefits in line with best practices could improve access and utilization.

DHERN Member Submissions

- Lavalekar, E., D'souza, S., Raghuram, H., Dongare, N., Khan, M. A., Likhite, C., Mahajan, G., Chowdhury, P., Shaikh, A., Bandewar, S. S., Singh, S., & Bhan, A. (2025). [Adapting the WHO BeSD COVID-19 Survey to Examine Behavioral and Social Drivers of Vaccine Uptake Among Transgender, Intersex, and Disability Communities in India](#). *Vaccines*, 13(11), 1095. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines13111095>
 - a. During COVID-19, transgender and gender-diverse people (TGD) and people with disabilities in India faced significant barriers to vaccination despite strong willingness to get vaccinated. Using community-based participatory methods, the authors adapted the WHO Behavioral and Social Drivers (BeSD) COVID-19 survey tool, the study found that TGD individuals encountered documentation issues and mistrust of health systems, while people with disabilities faced mobility, financial, and accessibility challenges. Both groups experienced digital exclusion, inadequate information tailored to their needs, and inconsistent implementation of inclusive policies, highlighting that vaccine willingness alone is insufficient to ensure vaccine equity and that addressing trust, infrastructural, and informational barriers is essential.
- Bacakova, M., Veck, W., & Wharton, J. (Eds.). (2025). [Forced Migration, Disability and Education: Inclusion and Exclusion at the Intersection of Displacement and Disablement](#). Routledge.

- a. This volume examines the right to inclusive education for displaced persons with disabilities and argues for an intersectional approach to advancing social justice in education globally. Refugees with disabilities face twice the amount of discrimination, exclusion, and inequality typically encountered by those with either disability or forced migration status alone, creating particular challenges in accessing education. The book brings together global insights and practicable solutions, including current theorization of language/terminology, concrete examples of inclusive practice, and guidance for educators and professionals on developing inclusive policies and cultures within educational institutions.
- Lehn SF, Rønne ST, Thorsted anne, et al. [General practitioner care continuity and individual health among people living in supported housing: a cross-sectional study](#). Scandinavian Journal of Public Health. 2025;0(0). doi:[10.1177/14034948251388883](#)
 - a. Compared with the general population, adults living in supported housing in Denmark had a lower continuity of general practitioner (GP) care, with 27.8% having contact with more than one GP clinic in 2019 compared to 14.1% in a matched reference population. Supported housing residents who contacted three or more GP clinics in one year also showed higher morbidity (27.4% cardiovascular diseases), more GP contacts, greater use of out-of-hour medical services, and more hospital contacts than those with fewer clinics used. The findings indicate that people in supported housing have lower GP continuity and higher levels of morbidity with more frequent health service use, suggesting disparities in primary care continuity and health outcomes for this population.
 - Frederick, Angela. 2025. [Disabled Power: A Storm, A Grid, and Embodied Harm in the Age of Disaster](#). New York: NYU Press.
 - a. Disabled Power tells the stories of Texans with disabilities who endured the 2021 Texas power crisis, which forced millions of Texas residents to endure a dayslong winter storm without heat or water. Based on 58 in-depth interviews with disabled Texans and parents of disabled children, Frederick highlights how disabled people and those with chronic health conditions are uniquely harmed when basic infrastructure such as power and water systems fail. She argues that the vulnerability people with disabilities experienced during this disaster was not an inevitable consequence of individual disabled bodies. Disabled Power offers a blueprint for reimagining vulnerability and resilience to center people with disabilities in disaster research and emergency response.

From,
The DHERN Team

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